



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

HEBREW ILLUMINATED MSS.¹

A. INTRODUCTORY.

1. THERE are two ways of studying Hebrew MSS. illuminations, just as there are two ways of studying various other branches of knowledge, such as languages or religions. One of these ways may be called the isolated method, and the other is the comparative method. If the first-named method were adopted in the present case, all that one would have to do would be to note carefully the features exhibited by illuminations found in Hebrew MSS. Comparison with other kinds of MSS. illuminations would have to be excluded. In following the comparative method, on the other hand, one would have to aim not only at knowing what Hebrew MSS. illuminations are like, but also at ascertaining their relationship to other branches of MSS. illuminations.

Now it is clear that a subject that is included in a University scheme of study should be studied in University fashion; and as the comparative method, which, by the way, is the very soul of modern study, has by this time gained a perfectly firm footing in University teaching, it would hardly do for Hebrew MSS. illuminations to lag behind the times; and I would, therefore, first of all recommend that those who intend to make a more or less special

¹ This paper was originally written as a lecture to be delivered at the Cambridge Summer Meeting, 1906, though there was only time to read portions of it on that occasion. This explains the personal form of address which is occasionally used. To the same cause is due the frequent breaking up of passages into short paragraphs, such a method being well suited to the style of a lecture of this kind. Instead of remodelling the paper in order to make it conform to the usual style of an article, it has seemed best (some few alterations excepted) to leave it as it originally stood.

study of the subject we are now considering should by way of preparation make themselves acquainted with the main features of European and to some extent also of Eastern MSS. illuminations in general.

Nor should students of the general subject of MSS. illuminations put the Hebrew part of it on one side, as if it did not exist. The general subject is, to begin with, obviously incomplete if one branch of it is left out; and secondly, I may even in these preliminary remarks, draw attention to one chapter of the art in which the Hebrew section fills a gap—or what is almost a gap—in the collections of illuminated MSS. in England and elsewhere. I refer to illuminations of Spanish origin. Specimens of this branch of early Gallic art (for specialists hold that the art of miniature painting was in the first instance imported into Christian Spain from France) are admittedly rather rare in our collections, and even illuminations that can be shown to have been executed in Spain are on examination often found not to exhibit at all, or but very slightly, the peculiar features which art critics have noted in illuminations of the decidedly Spanish manner. Here the Hebrew section steps in, for some at any rate of the illuminated Haggadahs, or Passover-night Services, in the British Museum and elsewhere, are not only of undoubtedly Spanish origin, but also exhibit some strongly marked features of genuine Spanish art. I admit that most of these MSS. have yet to be subjected to a special and accurate study in detail before a verdict can be pronounced on all points, but in the meantime the results of such a brilliant art-student as Dr. Julius von Schlosser, co-editor of the *Haggadah von Sarajevo*, who in forming his general estimate of these illuminations had reproductions of several of the British Museum Haggadah illuminations before him, are sufficient to justify the statement that students of the general subject of MSS. illuminations are likely to find in Hebrew MSS. specimens of Spanish art calculated to afford help in future investigations of this branch of early miniature painting.

2. Coming now to slightly closer quarters with our subject, it may be useful to remark that though its extent is not very wide, it is capable of a double division.

It may be divided (*a*) in accordance with the origin of the MSS. and the art which they exhibit, such as Spanish, French, Italian, or German. This clearly is a division which in itself fully demonstrates the necessity already insisted on that an effective study of Hebrew MSS. illuminations must follow the comparative, and not the isolated method.

But it may be divided (*b*) in accordance with the subjects illuminated, such as Bible, Prayer-books, Legal Codes, &c.

The most serviceable plan, however, seems to be to divide first by subjects, and then—so far as materials allow—each subject by schools of the illuminative art.

3. *Literature.* The task of giving an account of work already done in this special branch of study is not a difficult one, and this for the simple reason that the sin of “making many books without end” has not yet pervaded this outlying region of research. Let the ground by all means remain sacred, but may the select few not be all too few.

To be mentioned first and foremost is *Die Haggadah von Sarajevo* (Wien, 1898), by Drs. D. H. Müller and Julius von Schlosser, to which we shall have occasion to refer frequently later on. It should, however, be mentioned now that, although treating mainly on the Haggadah or Passover-Night Service, there is a very considerable amount of general information in it on the whole subject, more especially so in Prof. David Kaufmann’s essay *Zur Geschichte der jüdischen Handschriften-Illustration*, pp. 253–311.

Next in order should be named *L’Ornement Hébreu*, by Baron David Gunzburg and M. Vladimir Stassof. Of this work we shall also speak presently.

Dr. Gaster has done good service in publishing (London, 1901) his *Hebrew Illuminated Bibles of the Ninth and Tenth*

Centuries, containing reproductions of some fine specimens of early oriental illuminations.

A large number of Hebrew illuminations have been furthermore reproduced in different volumes of the *Jewish Encyclopedia*; and some reproductions are also found in various catalogues of Hebrew MSS., and in illustrations of articles in the JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, the *Revue des Etudes Juives*, and other publications.

References to a few other works will be found in Baron Gunzburg's 'Avant-Propos' which accompanies *L'Ornement Hébreu* already referred to.

B. THE JEWISH ELEMENT.

1. Having now said what seemed necessary by way of introduction, we may proceed to consider an important question which has recently been brought to the fore by Baron Gunzburg and M. Stassof's publication.

Is there such a thing as a specific Jewish art of MSS. illumination?

This question was by the courtesy of the editors discussed in the THE JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, July, 1906, and I will therefore on the present occasion confine myself to a few additional remarks on it.

The conclusion to which the large body of evidence irresistibly leads is, as I believe every careful student will admit, that the general homogeneity presented by the plates published by Baron Gunzburg and M. Stassof is to be accounted for not by the supposed existence of a specifically Jewish art of illumination, but by the oriental or semi-oriental provenance of the MSS. from which those plates were taken. The imitative character of the Hebrew MSS. illuminations produced in different parts of Europe can be proved beyond a shadow of doubt, and the corollary is that the same verdict holds good with regard to Hebrew illuminations executed 'in countries lying eastward'. There

¹ It may here be remarked that the same kind of indebtedness meets us in Jewish architecture. The persistence of the Moorish style in the

is even *prima facie* no reason whatever for assuming that, so far as art is concerned, the Jews of the Crimea, Egypt, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Yemen, and other eastern countries were more independent and original than the Jews of France, Italy, Spain, and other countries of the West.

This imitative character of the St. Petersburg illuminations was indeed fully recognized by the late Prof. David Kaufmann, who had an almost unparalleled experience in such matters. In a note on p. 261 of the *Haggadah von Sarajevo*, Prof. Kaufmann wrote as follows:—

“Die Handschriftensätze der Kaiserl. Bibliothek in St. Petersburg und das Nachleben byzantinischer Kunst in der jüdischen Manuscriptmalerei wird das grosse Tafelwerk von Stassow und Baron David Gunzburg, das seit Jahren vorbereitet wird, eingehend beleuchten.”

The art, therefore, which is exemplified by the reproductions contained in the Portfolio was regarded by Prof. Kaufmann as in the main at any rate of Byzantine origin, and it may in addition be suggested that a comparison of these plates with the fine set of Byzantine, Syriac, Coptic, Arabic, and other oriental illuminations published by M. Stassof himself in his *L'Ornement Slave et Oriental* (St. Petersburg, 1887), will reveal a general family likeness between eastern Jewish illuminations and the other branches of the illuminative art as practised in the East. Only in the Jewish branch of it the prohibition of the second commandment relative to the representation of human and other figures has been strictly obeyed, whilst the Christian forms of the same art rather favour these pictorial adornments.

Instead, therefore, of putting forward these plates as representative of a traditional and specific Jewish art of

building of Synagogues in various countries is no exception to this rule, as it was borrowed all the same. As an illustration from the Far East may be mentioned the Synagogue of Kai-Fung-Foo in China, which was merely a replica of a Chinese Temple (see *J. Q. R.*, XIII, pp. 25 sqq.). The peculiar form of the reading-desk (Seat of Moses) in the same Synagogue has, however, yet to be accounted for.

MSS. illuminations, M. Stassof might have fitly added a Jewish section to his fine series of Byzantine and oriental illuminations, given in *L'Ornement Slave et Oriental*. As we shall see presently, a Jewish oriental variety, distinguished by certain subsidiary features from oriental art in general, may freely be allowed to exist, or rather to have existed. But this is something quite different from believing in the existence of a specific Jewish art of MSS. illuminations.

Two other brief criticisms¹ on the publication of Baron Gunzburg and M. Stassof before leaving this part of the subject. Their own plate A, taken by them to exhibit the same style of art as the rest of the Portfolio, belongs in reality—and very distinctly so—to the Gallic type. One clear deviation of this plate from all the others consists in the representation on it of the Cherubim by busts of winged angels, whereas—as has already been remarked—no form whatsoever of either animal, man, or angel, is found in Jewish oriental illuminative art. In such matters the Eastern Jews are at one with strict Mohammedans, whilst Jewish artists in France, Spain, Italy, and Germany have, in conformity with the artistic forms flourishing around them, put such scruples on one side.

The next remark to be made is that M. Ropett's fine frontispiece intended to embody the "motifs" underlying the art exhibited in the plates of the Portfolio is misleading on one important point. The round Byzantine arch, which is so common a feature in the plates themselves, is entirely omitted in the frontispiece; and, as if to complete the misrepresentation, the sacred seven-branched candlestick is, contrary to its rounded form on the Arch of Titus—which, as can be seen from the illustrations of the article "Candlestick" in *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, is indeed

¹ A minor point to be noted is that plate C, taken from a Yemenite MS. in Baron Gunzburg's own possession, shows a different style of colouring from Plates I-XXII, and the design of the ornamentations is also rather different. The plate in fact represents another branch (the Yemenite) of the oriental styles of illumination.

the usual form—there represented with angular branches. There can, therefore, be no doubt that, as it stands, the frontispiece gives an incomplete and even wrong impression of the “motifs” of the art which it was intended to express, and this error seems to be part and parcel of the general misunderstanding regarding the place of these Jewish ornamentations in Eastern art in general.

2. But whilst not able to affirm the existence of a specific Jewish art in MSS. illuminations, we must take note of some special Jewish features in illuminated Hebrew MSS. A Hebrew illuminated MS. of, say, French origin, impresses one at once as something different from a Christian MS. belonging to the same school of ornamentation; and the same kind of difference between Jewish and non-Jewish ornamentation lies on the surface of MSS. belonging to all schools. But these special features, such as the choice of subjects, the introduction of Jewish symbols, and—negatively speaking—the exclusion of symbols belonging to a foreign cult, are clearly not essential to the style adopted, but are—so far as the art itself is concerned—of a merely subsidiary nature. There is also often the indefinable Jewish tone that rests on Hebrew MSS. illuminations to be considered. We are there face to face with the Jewish spirit making itself perceptible in one way or another to the mind not only, but also to the eye; but the technique and forms of the art as such are borrowed all the same. Some very interesting remarks on this part of our subject are made by Dr. von Schlosser in the *Haggadah von Sarajevo*, pp. 231–3. A case in point is the sinking of the dead body of Joseph in the Nile represented on fol. 20 of the *Haggadah of Sarajevo*. This special feature in the miniature rests on a later Jewish legend, but it is clearly a mere subsidiary detail. There would, in fact, be no reason why a Christian artist, hearing of such a legend, should not proceed to represent it pictorially.

3. Quite different from the question as to the existence of a specifically Jewish art of MSS. illuminations is that

proposed by the late Prof. Kaufmann and others, as to whether the ornamentations of Hebrew MSS. were executed by Jews or Gentiles. The answer to this question will, in substantial agreement with that of Prof. Kaufmann himself, have to be that, broadly speaking, Jewish artists of different schools are responsible for the Hebrew MSS. illuminations that have come down to us.

The ornamented Masorah, which forms so strong a feature in the plates published by Gunzburg and Stassof, are of Jewish workmanship on the face of them; for the art is there literally part and parcel of the text itself, and no one will affirm that any but Jewish Scribes were in those days—or are indeed in our own day—capable of grappling with a subject like the Masorah. Indeed—if you will allow a short digression—the Masorah in so intricate and often so wayward a subject that even an experienced Masorite may at times find himself compelled to own his ignorance, a confession, by the way, which should in many another branch of study be more often made than is actually the case.

With regard to the other kinds of illuminations, a distinction ought to be made between ornamentations which are closely interwoven with the text illuminated and full-page or part-page illuminations detached from the text. In the former case a Jewish artist ought everywhere to be assumed. In the latter case the work will, in the vast majority of cases, also be found to be Jewish, though there no doubt are cases in which it would seem more reasonable to assign the illuminations to a Christian artist.

Thus the representation of the Creator resting on the Sabbath Day depicted on fol. 2 in the *Haggadah von Sarajevo* is, with very good reason, assumed by Dr. Julius von Schlosser to have been executed by a Jewish artist, the figure of the Deity being quite different from the usual Christian representation of God¹. In the Gebhardt Bible, preserved in the Benedictine Convent, Admont, we have, on

¹ See, however, I. Abrahams, *Festival Studies*, p. 50.

the other hand, on the first panel in the pictorial history of the creation, as reproduced in *Monumenta Judaica*, vol. I, the Creator depicted much in the likeness of one form or another of the Christ in mediaeval art, with one winged figure on his right and another on his left, and all three with halos behind their heads. A miniature of this kind one naturally imagines to have come from the hand of a Christian artist. But it is impossible to exercise too much caution in such matters. Dr. Julius von Schlosser informs us, for instance, that the Deity showing himself to Moses in the burning bush is represented in an Italian MS. of the Haggadah in the Kaufmann collection (now public property in Budapest) in perfect conformity to the type of Christ in Christian art; yet the illuminations of that MS. are supposed to have been executed by a Jewish artist. But again, a Hebrew Biblical MS. in the Laurentian Library at Florence is by Dr. Kaufmann himself shown to have been undoubtedly illuminated by a Christian hand¹, although the illuminations themselves would, according to the same authority, be regarded as harmless from a Jewish point of view.

The following two considerations should be kept in mind. The first is that in Europe, and more especially in France and Italy, Jewish artists had at a very early period emancipated themselves from the original Jewish objection to paint figures of men, angels, and even the Deity himself in illustration of the sacred story; and as their art was based on Christian models, it is very difficult for us to determine how near to Christian types a Jewish artist may at times have allowed himself to stray.

The second consideration is that in by far the largest

¹ Mr. E. N. Adler also thinks that the illuminated Hebrew MS. from the Ashburnham Collection which was sold some years ago at Sotheby's was really the work of Giotto and one of his pupils (see *J. Q. R.*, XI, pp. 679-82). Dr. Kaufmann's statement that the Laurentian MS. referred to in the text is the only known example of a Biblical MS. illuminated by a Christian hand would in any case seem to be erroneous.

number of Hebrew MSS. illuminations deep and intimate sympathy with the subject is so unmistakable that it is impossible to think of any but a Jewish hand having executed them. It would not be quite natural that in those early days of general intolerance a Christian artist should have succeeded—or even seriously attempted—to identify himself so completely with the Jewish religious and national element that pervades many of these artistic efforts.

4. *Names.* One other matter has to be considered before proceeding to a general survey of our materials. If we assume Jewish artists to have illuminated all or most of the extant illuminated Hebrew MSS., why is a mention of the artists' names so rare in these MSS.? It might be held that the name of a Christian artist was likely to have been purposely suppressed in a Jewish MS.; but what reason could there have been for omitting from such a MS. the name of a Jewish artist?

To this question two satisfactory answers can be given.

1. In the first place the same absence or rather rarity of names meets us in all other kinds of illuminated MSS. If you glance through any large collection of such MSS., including various specimens of say French, English, or Italian illustrations, you will find that names of artists are everywhere conspicuous by their absence rather than by their presence. The mention of the artist's name is, in fact, the exception, not the rule, in all kinds of illuminated MSS., Jewish as well as non-Jewish. There indeed seems to have been much less individualism in those earlier days than there is now, and there was therefore also much less eagerness on the part of artists to inscribe their names on their work.

2. Thanks mainly to the labours of the late Prof. David Kaufmann, we are in possession of a certain percentage of names of Jewish artists to justify us in assuming the existence of an unbroken line of such artists covering the

whole period to which the extant illuminated Hebrew MSS. belong.

It will on the present occasion be sufficient to mention a few representative names recorded in Prof. Kaufmann's Essay, together with one or two other names from fresh sources.

Beginning with Spain, we have, for instance, the name of Israel b. Israel of Toledo (a member, therefore, of an early Spanish Israeli family), from whose hand there are illuminated Bible codices of the years 1272 and 1277, preserved respectively at Paris and Parma.

Two other illuminated Bible codices, one of which is preserved at Oxford and the other in a private library at Tripolis, were executed by sons of Abraham ibn Gaon, namely, Joshua ibn Abraham ibn Gaon and Shemtob ben Abraham ibn Gaon, in the years 1306 and 1312 respectively.

Special mention should be made of the fact that there is extant a treatise on the preparation of colours and gold for purposes of illumination by the Hispano-Jewish writer Abraham b. Yehudah ibn Hayyim. This treatise is preserved in Codex de Rossi 945, and was written in the year 1262.

There is here indeed additional reason for thinking that illuminated Hebrew MSS. of Spanish origin, when duly taken notice of, are likely to fill what is almost a gap in even our larger collections of illuminated European MSS. in general.

Turning now to Italy, described by Prof. Kaufmann as "das gelobte Land der hebräischen Handschriften-Illustration," we may add two names of Jewish artists to the very scanty results of Dr. Kaufmann's researches. The name of Moses b. Isaac is expressly mentioned in the epigraph of the first edition of Bahya ben Asher's Commentary on the Pentateuch (Naples, 1492), not only as a clever type-cutter, but also as skilled in the preparation of woodcuts (חכם בהרושת עץ); and as early printing as well as the illuminations accompanying it were—as in the nature of

things it could indeed not be otherwise—taken over bodily from the art of the scribe and the MSS. illuminator, we may fairly assign this Moses ben Isaac a place in our list.

The second Italian name to be mentioned is that of Solomon Italia, who flourished about the middle of the seventeenth century, and from whose workmanship the British Museum possesses copper-plate engravings of an Esther scroll, containing architectural and floral designs over each column, with a female figure holding a palm-branch in her hand resting on each side of the rounded arch. The figures of Ahasuerus, Esther, Mordecai, and Haman are placed in regular succession within the columns. The text of the Megillah is in manuscript, and we thus have another link between writing and the art of printing.

In Gandellini's *Notizie istoriche degli Intagliatori* (Siena, 1808), p. 136, Italia is described as "forse di nazione Ebraea" (perhaps of the Hebrew nation), but as there again the only work mentioned is the engraving of a portrait (dated 1641) of the Jewish artist Judah Leon, known by the name of Templo, his Jewish origin—as indeed the name Salomon sufficiently suggests—may be assumed as practically certain.

The name of Judah Leon or Templo brings us to *Holland*. He acquired the appellation Templo from his colossal models of the Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple, which were purchased in 1643 by Queen Henrietta Maria of England. This artist, though not introduced here as a MSS. illuminator, serves to strengthen our belief in a continuous line of Jewish artists who took sacred things as the subjects of their art.

But the largest number of known names of Jewish artists belong to the eighteenth century, when there was quite a revival of MSS. illuminations—not indeed of a very original or very elevating kind—in Germany, Poland, and some of the adjacent countries.

Prominent among those names is that of Israel ben Asher, of Selz in Lithuania, who wrote and illuminated in 1748

Hayyim Vital's Kabbalistic work עץ חיים ("tree of life"), the MS. being preserved in the library of Copenhagen (No. XLIII).

Mose Juda, son of Benjamin Wolf Broda, of Trebitsch in Moravia executed in 1723 an illuminated Haggadah for Lazarus von Geldern, an ancestor of Heinrich Heine.

A third name is that of Aaron Wolf Herrlingen of Gewitch (also in Moravia). Illuminated MSS. from his hand, dated 1749, 1751, &c., are preserved in private collections.

C. GENERAL SURVEY OF EXTANT MATERIALS.

I. *The Bible.*

We naturally begin with the Bible, which, notwithstanding the higher and even the highest critics, still somehow continues to exist.

Here we have two kinds of illuminations to consider: (1) the Masorah in the form of designs, and (2) Pictorial and border illuminations.

1. The finest specimens so far known of the illuminated Masorah are reproduced in Gunzburg and Stassof's Portfolio. I would more particularly direct your attention to Plates VII and VII* in which the Masoretic diagrams are very elaborately worked out in gold and colours. The date of the MS. from which these two plates are taken is A.D. 1010, and its provenance is Cairo. It appears very likely that most, if not all, the specimens of illuminated Masorah in this Portfolio are of Karaite origin. Artistic designs in Biblical books, as indeed in Hebrew books in general, must have been regarded even in Geonic times in the light of an innovation¹. There is no trace of the art of illumination, not to speak of miniature painting, in Talmudical literature²; and it is, therefore, very likely that the Karaites,

¹ On the tradition preserved by Philo and Josephus that the Code of the Law sent by the high-priest from Jerusalem to Ptolemy Philadelphus was written in gold, see Gaster, *Hebrew Illuminated Bibles*, p. 9. See also משנה טושיים, I, 9. In שבת, fol. 103 b, it is enacted that a ספר חורא in which the divine Names (אמורה) are written in gold should be hidden away.

² See Gaster, *Hebrew Illuminated Bibles*, p. 10.

who, by the way, were in early days very numerous in Cairo and Palestine, were the first to override the old objection to illuminations, and follow in this respect—as they did in several other matters—the lead of the Mohammedan world. This innovation extended, however, only to the representation of arches, sacred utensils, and diagrams of all kinds. Miniatures of any sort remained—as in the illuminations of the Koran and Mohammedan religious books in general—strictly excluded.

The Rabbanites may be presumed to have adopted—and this notwithstanding the protest of several authorities¹—the art of illumination later on, having found it to be harmless and a relief from the tedium of unbroken seriousness. Among western—and, therefore, certainly Rabbanite—specimens of the Masorah in diagrams, I would, in addition to those given by Kaufmann, mention the British Museum MS., Add. 21,160 (circa 1300), a page of which is reproduced in Dr. C. D. Ginsburg's *Portfolio of Facsimiles* (2nd edition), Pl. XI. This MS. was written in Germany, the home at that time mainly of grotesque rather than beautiful illustrations. Strange-looking animal figures are the main stock of these designs.

In Spanish MSS. the Masorah is as a rule written out in a purely straightforward fashion. Specimens, however, of the Masorah, neatly shaped in the form of candlesticks, &c., are found in the B. M. MS. Add. 12,250, which probably belongs to the thirteenth century. A page of this MS. is reproduced in Dr. Ginsburg's *Portfolio*, plate xvii. Mr. David Sassoon's Biblical MS. written in Spain in 1383 also deserves special mention.

2. In speaking of pictorial and border illuminations, a sharp distinction has to be made—so far as the Pentateuch is concerned—between the scroll and the codex. In the scroll, intended as it was—and is—for use at Divine worship, no additions whatsoever are allowed, not even vowel-signs or accents (although a number of Yemenite

¹ e. g. Yehudah Hāsīd, in the second half of the twelfth century.

Pentateuch scrolls exhibit what is known as dry points to mark the pauses). But in the codex or MS. in book-form, which was intended for private use, the prohibition not to add anything was not generally held to apply, and the scribe thus felt free to introduce all kinds of ornamentations.

Many examples are described by Kaufmann, but we may here mention a few specimens drawn chiefly from other sources.

Beginning with oriental ornamentations, there are, besides the MSS. represented in Gunzburg and Stassof's Portfolio, some fine specimens in Dr. Gaster's possession, reproductions of which can be seen in his publication entitled *Hebrew Illuminated Bibles of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, to which reference has already been made.

Akin to these, and quite as early, are the undoubted Karaite specimens of ornamentation preserved in the B. M. MS. Oriental 2540. A page of this MS., showing the Hebrew text of a part of Exodus in the Arabic character, provided with Hebrew vowel-points and accents, and exhibiting ornamentations in gold to mark the "open" and "closed" sections¹ in the text, has been reproduced in the B. M. Catalogue of Hebrew MSS., vol. I, pl. v.

A few ornamentations of Persian origin and a number of Yemenite illuminations are reproduced from British Museum MSS. on plate B of Baron Gunzburg's Portfolio, and plate C of the same publication represents a Yemenite Biblical MS. in Baron Gunzburg's own possession. To these should be added the B. M. MS. Or. 2348 (dated A.D. 1496), foll. 154^b, 155^a of this MS. exhibiting elaborate ornamentations interwoven with the date of the MS. and the name of its first owner. Red of different shades, but never of a very clear or bright hue, predominates in all the illuminations hailing from Yemen.

Specimens of North-African Biblical illumination of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are to be found in the B.M.

¹ The פתוחה וסגורה do not, however, tally these with the usual order.

Add. MS. 15,283 (formerly in the collection of the Duke of Sussex). The border illuminations on the opening pages of the books of the Pentateuch exhibited in this MS. resemble for the most part Byzantine patterns given in M. Stassof's *L'Ornement Slave et Oriental*, but the illustration at the beginning of Genesis reminds one of what may be called Hispano-Italian patterns of the fifteenth century.

Of Portuguese origin (dated Lisbon, 1483) is the beautiful MS. of the Old Testament numbered Or. 2626-8 in the B. M. Collection. The text itself is left unornamented (plate iii in B. M. Cat. vol. i), but the list of the 613 Commandments and the Masoretic rubrics given at the beginning and end of the volumes are placed within finely executed Arabesque borders, and whole sentences, tastefully arranged, are frequently written in gold. It must be remarked, however, that these and other ornamentations, though produced in the Spanish Peninsula, exhibit much likeness to Italian and partly also to French ornamentations of the same period.

Italian Biblical ornamentations of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are worthily represented by, e.g., the B. M. MS. Add. 15,423 (formerly in the collection of the Duke of Sussex).

Elaborate representations of the golden candlestick and other Temple utensils are found—again in addition to those mentioned by Kaufmann and the reproductions in Baron Gunzburg's Portfolio—in the B. M. MSS. King's 1 (A.D. 1383) and Add. 12,250 (thirteenth and fourteenth centuries) already mentioned. These two MSS. may be described as being of Hispano-French origin, the writing being Spanish, and the form of ornamentation belonging to the French order.

An interesting specimen of decidedly German art is the B. M. Add. 15,282. It has full-page illuminations at the beginning of each of the books of the Pentateuch, consisting mainly of Gothic architectural designs, and various human and animal figures, the latter both natural and

grotesque. Smaller illuminations are found at the beginning of each of the Megilloth, Lamentations excepted. The designs and the colouring are worth studying. Gold predominates.

None of the MSS. so far mentioned contain pictorial representations of biblical passages or historical scenes. It will be seen further on that the main repository of such representations is the illuminated Haggadah. They are rather rare in Biblical MSS. One such specimen, is, however, preserved in the Library of this University (Cambridge). I am referring to the MS. Ee. 5, 9 which, besides a number of other ornamentations, contains a frontispiece to the Book of Job representing the patriarch seated on a dunghill, tormented by Satan, whilst his wife stands before him offering evil counsel. This MS. is of German origin, and is dated A.D. 1347.

3. A word must be said on illuminated rolls of the book of Esther. A sharp distinction has to be drawn between the scrolls intended for use in the synagogue, or, more generally speaking, for public liturgical recital, and those prepared for private use. In the former kind no additions of any sort were allowed. But in the case of private scrolls illuminations were popularly considered a proper adjunct to the text.

Of the various extant specimens I will here only mention two. The B. M. MS. Or. 1047, which is of German origin and probably belongs to the sixteenth century, contains on the upper and lower margins and in the spaces between the columns a large variety of coloured drawings, representing the events recorded in the book. The person who illuminated this MS. was a caricaturist with a genuine vein of humour, and his coloured drawings are well worth looking at. The diminutive waist of Queen Vashti, for instance, shows what probably was the high "mode" in Germany at the time, not unlike, indeed, the superlatively high "mode" of modern days. No wonder that, with such a waist, Queen Vashti came to grief.

Another illuminated roll of Esther (which, however I have not personally seen) is preserved in the parish church of Yarmouth. It seems to exhibit affinities with the B. M. MS. just spoken of.

II. *The Haggadah.*

In the "Textband" of the edition of *Haggadah of Sarajevo*, Haggadah illuminations are grouped under the following headings: (1) Spanish, (2) French, (3) German, (4) Italian.

On the present occasion I will only briefly speak of the Sarajevo illuminations themselves and of six illuminated Haggadahs in the British Museum.

But it is first of all necessary to remark that illuminated Haggadahs of the Spanish school are as a rule provided with a series of miniatures in illustration of early biblical history, and more particularly of the events connected with the Egyptian bondage and the Exodus. These generally precede the text of the Haggadah, but are occasionally found at the end. So far, only one instance is known of a Haggadah of other than Spanish origin being provided with such a series of pictorial illuminations. This is the Italian Haggadah of from the thirteenth to the fourteenth century in the Kaufmann Library at Budapest, described in *The Haggadah of Sarajevo*, pp. 187-99. But the editors themselves state that, though the main character of its illuminations is Italian, the Haggadah also shows some decidedly French elements, besides a few oriental features. The likelihood is that the idea of adding a series of pictorial representations has in this case come to Italy from Spain by way of France, so that the exclusively Spanish origin of these series of miniatures still remains vindicated.

So far as the *Haggadah of Sarajevo* itself is concerned, the editors, after a careful scrutiny, came to the conclusion that its origin must be sought in North Spain, a conclusion which finds a striking confirmation in the fact that the first

page of illuminated text (see the frontispiece of the edition) includes a coat of arms which is believed to have been worn by the Kings of Aragon since 1137. It must not be forgotten, however, that so far as liturgical and other matters are concerned, the South of France stood in a close relationship with the North of Spain.

The miniatures begin, as you may see from the "Tafelband" of the edition, with the history of the creation, continuing thence to the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, and concluding with four illuminated pages showing (1) the blessing of the people by Moses before his death, and the laying of his hands on Joshua; (2) a representation of the Ark of the Covenant together with adjacent architectural features of the future Temple; (3) scenes from the "Séder"; (4) a picture of the interior of a Synagogue and worshippers. The last plate in the "Tafelband" is a reproduction in colours of a page in the text of the Haggadah.

Of the six B. M. Haggadah MSS. which I should now like to bring briefly to your notice, five belong to the *Spanish ritual*, and one is of *German origin*.

(a) *MS. Add. 27,210 (XIVth Century)* contains a series of miniatures illustrating the history of Genesis and the earlier portions of Exodus, the first picture representing the naming of the animals by Adam, and the last the preparation of the Passover. Each illuminated page is divided into four equal compartments, and the sketches, which are in blue, red, and other colours, are thrown on gold ground. A page of illuminated text has been reproduced in the B. M. Catalogue, vol. II, pl. vi.

(b) *In MS. Or. 2884 (XIVth Century)* the series of miniatures opens with a sketch representing the creation of Adam, and ends with a representation of the family at table during "Séder." All except the last two pages contain two pictures each, one on the upper and the other on the lower half of the page. Of the last two pages, which contain only one picture each, that representing a "Minbar," or rostrum in the Synagogue with a full complement of

worshippers has been reproduced in the B. M. Catalogue vol. II, pl. vii. The impression of this scene, with the seven characteristic lamps suspended from beams below the arches or from the ceiling, is decidedly Moorish. The arch on the left shows, however, the trifolium shape. The form of the pulpit here represented should have been included in the illustration of the article "Almemmar" in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. I.

The colour predominating in the miniatures is red. The initials in the text are partly in gold and partly in silver.

(c) *MS. Or. 1404 (XIVth-XVth Century)* presents a series beginning with a sketch of Moses at the burning bush and ending with representations of the Passover-night services. Each page contains two pictures, one occupying the upper and the other the lower half of the space. The paints are rather heavily laid on, and are often blurred. Much gold has been used.

This MS. shows much likeness to the Crawford Spanish Haggadah (now in the Rylands Library, Manchester); and it is remarkable that the editors of the *Haggadah of Sarajevo* have not noticed this fact. Their idea that the art in it is an "Abklatsch der gleichzeitigen italienischen Kunst" is, in the face of what they themselves say of the Crawford Haggadah, decidedly erroneous. They would no doubt have judged otherwise if they had had the opportunity of studying the MS. itself, or if they had had more than one small specimen of it before them. The Crawford Haggadah is, however, no doubt superior to it.

(d) *MS. Or. 2737 (XIVth Century)* is an example of a Spanish Haggadah with the series of miniatures following instead of preceding the text. The first subject represented are the labours of the Israelites in Egypt. The series continues down to the preparation of the Passover lamb, and is then followed by four designs illustrating the intended sacrifice of Isaac. Red is the predominant colour. This MS. is of octavo size, most of the other Spanish Haggadahs in the British Museum and elsewhere being of quarto size.

(e) *Add. 14,761 (XIVth Century)* is a Spanish Haggadah without a series of historical pictures. It has by way of compensation (1) very finely executed representations of the "Séder" in its different stages; (2) pictures of Rabban Gamaliel and other Rabbis; (3) a rather slight sketch of the Exodus; (4) a fanciful full-page illustration of a Matzah; (5) various border ornamentations. The Spanish Haggadahs accompanied by series of miniatures are, however, also provided with similar ornamentations of the text itself.

The last B. M. Haggadah which I would bring to your notice is (f) the MS. *Add. 14,762*, of *German* origin. It is a large quarto, almost approaching to a folio. No series of miniatures is, of course, to be expected in a German Haggadah, and this particular MS. is no doubt far surpassed by the German Haggadahs preserved in the "National Museum" in Nürnberg and elsewhere; but I would draw your attention to a particular feature of German MSS. of this kind which is well represented on fol. 4^a in this B. M. MS. It is a feature which embodies a strong humorous element. I am referring to what is known as the "Jaknehas" illustrations. This combination of sounds is only a *memoria technica* consisting of the first letters of יין (wine), קריש (blessing over the cup), נר (the ceremonial light), הברלה (ceremony of separating the Sabbath and festivals from the days following them), and זמן (time)—(the idea of times or seasons lying at the base of all festival celebrations). In trying to pronounce these letters, something like "Jaknehas" was produced. This to a German ear sounded like Jagen Has, i. e. "chasing hare," and, turned round, it became Hasenjagd (i. e. hare hunting). It thus came to pass that German illuminators of the Haggadah and other texts accompany the passages connected with the *memoria technica* "Jaknehas" by scenes of the chase, in which, however, besides hares other innocent creatures, and more especially deer, are concerned.

It is certainly funny that hares and other creatures

should be hunted down simply because certain Hebrew letters appeared in their German pronunciation to suggest it. Scenes of hunting would, however, in any case have been introduced into the Haggadah and other Hebrew MSS. of German origin ; for such scenes appear to have been taken over bodily into Jewish MSS. from Christian models, in which the spiritual seeking out of people was often thus symbolized, and the *memoria technica* "Jaknehas" only served as a sort of humorous sanction of the practice. The humour appears, however, to have been partly unconscious.

III. *Other Subjects.*

(a) *Service-books.* You will find a considerable amount of information on this part of the subject in *The Haggadah von Sarajevo*, Textband, pp. 267-77, and an illustrated *German Mahzor*, or Festival Service-book, is described with accompanying illustrations, on pp. 114-120 of the same work. There are also several illuminated Hebrew Service-books in this country ; but on the present occasion I will only draw your attention to two illustrated Italian "Mahzorim" in the British Museum, and a few others in private London libraries. The B. M. MS. Add. 19,944-5 was executed in Florence in the year 1441 A. D., and may be regarded as a fine specimen of Jewish workmanship produced in that artistic city. Some of its illuminations should be compared with those found in the MS. of the Pentateuch, numbered Add. 15,423 already mentioned and Or. 5024 to be mentioned presently in connexion with legal codes. A specimen page of ornamented text in Add. 19,944 has been reproduced in the B. M. Cat. II, pl. viii.

The other B. M. Italian illuminated MS., belonging, however, to a different branch of Italian art, to which I would draw your attention, is the MS. Harley 5686, dated A. D. 1466. Besides a number of ornamented initials and border illuminations, the MS. exhibits several pictorial illustra-

tions. The most interesting of these is a bridal procession on fol. 27^b-28^a, the details and meaning of which still requires study. The drawing and colouring of the two scenes in the procession are very delicate, though now slightly faded.

Dr. Gaster and Mr. David Sassoon also own illuminated liturgical MSS. of interest. Mr. E. N. Adler's very important collection of Hebrew MSS. would, of course, also furnish interesting examples of this and other branches of illumination.

(b) *Legal Codes*. Of illuminated legal codes I will also only mention two, it being part of the plan of this lecture to speak mainly of illuminations that have come under my own notice.

A good Italian specimen is the B. M. MS. Or. 5024 (dated A. D. 1374) which contains the "Decisions of Isaiah of Trani, the younger." Students will do well to compare this MS. both with Add. 15,423 (the Italian Pentateuch of the fifteenth-sixteenth century already mentioned) and the liturgical codex Add. 19,944-5 also already spoken of, as different stages of the illuminative art can be traced in them. MS. Or. 5024 is the earliest of the three, Add. 19,944-5 comes last in order of time, and Add. 15,423 may be ranged between the two.

Among the illuminations in this legal code I would specially mention the strictly *ad rem* picture placed at the beginning of the section which opens with the transaction of selling a ship. On the side are duly painted in pleasing colours of blue, &c., a ship, and the buyer putting its price into the hands of the seller.

An exceedingly fine legal code containing the *Mishneh Torah* or *Yad-ha-Hazaka* "of Maimonides is the B. M. Codex numbered Harley 5698-9. It was executed in Spain, but, as is often the case with fifteenth century Spanish illuminations, the art is in the main Italian. From the reproduction of a page reproduced in the B. M. Hebrew MSS. Cat. II, Pl. III, it can be seen that the original arabesque design

has been richly worked over with foliage, blossoms, fruit, and figures of birds.

(c) *Marriage Contracts*. Specimens of "Kethūboth" from the tenth century downward are found in the Cambridge and also the Oxford share of the Cairo Genizah¹, and a few of these are provided with illuminations. One of the earliest illuminated Marriage Contracts was recently acquired by the British Museum. It is on a large scale, measuring about 28 in. by 23½ in.; and it is dated Modena, Friday, the 7th day of Marheshwan, A.D. 5318 (i.e. late in A.D. 1557). The names of the contracting parties are Ephraim Kalonymus Sanguini and Luna, daughter of Mordecai Fano.

The outer illumination, beginning within about an inch from the edges, consists of artistically cut out patterns showing blossoms, fruit, figures of birds, &c. Spaces of vellum are at regular intervals left uncut, and on these the signs of the zodiac have been painted, three on each side, beginning with Aries or טלה in the middle of the upper space, and continuing in the usual order on the right side of it. Red paper (apparently of a later make) has been pasted underneath these cut patterns in order to set off the effect of the whole. The signs of the zodiac, it should be mentioned, connect the marriage-contract with astrology.

The intertwined circular designs between these outer illuminations and the main part contain in minute writing portions of the Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, and suitable verses from the Psalms.

The principal design consists of an archway bounded by waving pillars² like those in old St. Peter's Rome, which

¹ It almost sounds like a piece of irony to record that whilst the early Cairo Kethūboth went to Oxford and Cambridge, the British Museum has got hold of a number of interesting ancient "Gittin."

² See *Die Haggadah von Sarajevo*, p. 224. The waving pillars are also found on, e.g., the title-pages of תקני דודור (Mantua, 1557), the דור (Mantua, 1558-60), and the illuminated Haggadah printed at Mantua in 1560 (in this case coloured).

have exercised so strong a fascination on the artistic mind.

The pillars are garlanded, and looped and knotted bands hang down from the outer corners of the capitals of each. An amoretto or cupid, with a trumpet in the right hand and a budding branch in the left, sits on the inner corner of the capital of each pillar, and a design which is apparently meant to represent a crown surmounts the archway, the words *קול ששון וקול שמחה קול התן וקול בלה* (the voice of jubilation and the voice of joy, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride), being written in spaces left free in the upper ornamentation of each.

The "Kethubah" itself is, of course, written in the open wide space of the archway, the whole producing something of the impression of an illuminated title-page, with an elaborate description of the book within the ornamentations.

At the bottom, just over the lower line of the minute circular writing, are on the left side a group of coloured figures representing Abraham, Sarah, and Lot leaving Haran, with the Hebrew text of Genesis xii. 1 in the left corner. To the right of this group is a coloured figure, probably representing Israel personified (or, perhaps, the prophet Isaiah in the act of declaiming his prophecy), with Isa. xl. 27 in the right corner.

(d) *Religious Philosophy and Ethics.* As in every other branch of the literature, so also with regard to *philosophy*, the esteem in which a work was held at the time can be measured by the amount of care bestowed on the production of copies thereof; and illumination of a fine and elaborate kind must be taken to mark a very high degree of such esteem. It does not, however, always follow that posterity confirms the opinion held of a book in the earlier days of its circulation. Examples of this kind are, as every one knows, superlatively common in our own days; and antiquity was quite as likely to exaggerate the value of certain productions as people are

in the present day. Besides, a book may be really of very high importance at the time of its appearance, and prove itself of little moment in the ages that follow. It may have served to grapple successfully with a certain vanishing phase of thought, or with a certain controversy that was raging at the time; and when such a particular phase of thought had given place to another, or when the controversy had, partly at any rate, died down, the once important book had necessarily to give place to works dealing with other problems and other modes of human strife.

Thus, whilst on the one hand Moses Maimonides' *Doctor Perplexorum*, on which the illuminative art has bestowed so much care¹, is a leading example of a work of pre-eminently lasting value thus honoured, there are also finely illuminated examples² of Jacob b. Abbamari's *Malmaḥ hat-Talmidim*, a work which justly took high rank at the time of its appearance in the thirteenth century as a defence of the religious philosophy introduced by Maimonides, but is now only of value as exhibiting a phase in the Maimonidaean controversy.

It is comforting, however, to know that by far the largest number of illuminated mediaeval Hebrew works proved of lasting value and importance. Antiquity thus appears to have been wiser in its day than many book-producers and book-readers are in the present day.

As in a manner belonging to the subject of *ethics* may be mentioned illustrated copies of the משלי שועלים³ (*Parabolae Vulpium*) of Berachya Nakdān (whom some writers believe to be identical with Benedictus le Poncteur, who lived in Oxford in the thirteenth century) and the Fables of Isaac Sahula, entitled משל הקרמוני.

(e) In speaking of *Medical MSS.*, mention should be

¹ The finest specimen (dated Barcelona, 1348) appears to be preserved at Copenhagen (see the *Hag. von Sarajevo*, Textband, p. 289).

² See op. cit. p. 290.

³ See *Hag. von Sarajevo*, p. 291.

made of the Oxford Codex 2113, which contains an illuminated copy of Maimonides פרקים (or Medical Chapters). But the greatest amount of artistic care was naturally bestowed on Avicenna's Canon. The most finely illuminated Hebrew Codex of this great work is 2197 in the University Library of Bologna. The illuminations are indeed of so fine a quality that it was one of the Italian art-treasures which Napoleon ordered to be carried away to Paris, where it remained till 1815.

(f) *Family Megilloth and Testaments*. Illuminated documents relating to family histories are, as far as our present information goes, of late origin; and illuminated last wills and testaments also appear to be a late idea¹. Dr. Kaufmann mentions the will ornamented with pen-and-ink designs of Lemle Mose (or Rheingönheim) executed in 1722.

Our task is now completed, but at the conclusion I should like to draw your attention to a kind of illuminated כל בו ("everything in it"). This is the B.M. MS. Add. 11,639, which is the gem of the Museum collection of Hebrew illuminated MSS. It is of French origin, and belongs to the thirteenth century. The miniatures of this MS. are well worth the honour of having a special treatise written on them. The same may be said of several other illuminated Hebrew MSS. preserved in English and other libraries.

G. MARGOLIOUTH.

¹ See D. Kaufmann, *Aus Heinrich Heine's Ahnensaal*, p. 68; also Löwenstein, *Geschichte der Juden in der Kurpfalz*, pp. 170 sqq.